




seascapes

THE OLD BOOK CORNER
\$ 25.00
SW
8415

What is stated is solid and vague

water-sought music for the white space
undulating perhaps uncertainly

not of understanding but engulfment

vulnerable to time, expression
the prophecy of change and similarity
improvised shores of sound, jazz-splashes

possibilities of perception or loss
the longest, highest lines
the smallest particles inaudible
hidden in womb-dark drown,
at forty the murder incomprehensible

listeners spiralling in and surround
music without conception or end

around those fragments
deeper silences rarely heard

the eternal love of Ammons
the spacing, setting of that poetry
the poet speaks and sings the
poet composes the singer
the composer
poets

nothing compares the ocean, complete,
yet something has been asked, imperfect,
a space and time realized,
forsaken.

Kenneth Frazelle

to
A. R. Ammons
Kevin Frazelle
Charles Wilmoth

and
the memory of
John Ono Lennon

PETER PERRET, Conductor

DONNA STEPHENSON, Mezzo Soprano

Poems Recorded By A. R. Ammons

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

Clifford Tretick	Flute
Thomas Moore	Oboe and English Horn
Michelle Grady	Clarinet
Melanie Mattson	Bassoon
Alfredo Jimenez	Horn
Chris Deane	Percussion
Chris Jones	Percussion
Gerald Reid	Percussion
Mary Beth Brannock	Harp
Scott Faigen	Celesta
Patrick Byers	Piano
Jackie Lee	Violin
Kurt Coble	Violin
Nancy Kredel	Viola
Brooke Beazley	Cello
Robert Oppelt	Double Bass
Kathie de Nobriga	Performance Coordinator

SEASCAPES has been set to the following poems by A.R. Ammons.

So I Said I am Ezra

So I said I am Ezra
and the wind whipped my throat
gaming for the sounds of my voice
I listened to the wind
go over my head and up into the night
Turning to the sea I said
I am Ezra
but there were no echoes from the waves
The words were swallowed up
in the voice of the surf
or leaping over the swells
lost themselves oceanward
Over the bleached and broken fields
I moved my feet and turning from the wind
that ripped sheets of sand
from the beach and threw them
like seamists across the dunes
swayed as if the wind were taking me away
and said
I am Ezra
As a word too much repeated
falls out of being
so I Ezra went out into the night
like a drift of sand
and splashed among the windy oats
that clutch the dunes
of unremembered seas

The Constant

When leaving the primrose, bayberry dunes, seaward
I discovered the universe this morning,

I was in no
mood
for wonder,
the naked mass of so much miracle

already beyond the vision
of my grasp:

along a rise of beach, a hundred feet from the surf,
a row of clam shells
four to ten feet wide
lay sinuous as far as sight:

in one shell — though in the abundance
there were others like it — upturned,
four or five inches across the wing,
a lake
three to four inches long and two inches wide,
all dimensions rounded,
indescribable in curve:

and on the lake a turning galaxy, a film of sand,
co-ordinated, nearly circular (no real perfections),
an inch in diameter, turning:

turning:
counterclockwise, the wind hardly perceptible from 11 o'clock
with noon at sea:
the galaxy rotating,
but also,

at a distance from the shell lip,
revolving
round and round the shell:

a gull's toe could spill the universe:
two more hours of sun could dry it up:
a higher wind could rock it out:

the tide will rise, engulf it, wash it loose:
utterly:

the terns, their
young somewhere hidden in clumps of grass or weed,
were diving *sshik sshik* at me,
then peeling upward for another round and dive:

I have had too much of this inexhaustible miracle:
miracle, this massive, drab constant of experience.

Saliences

Consistencies rise
and ride
the mind down
hard routes
walled
with no outlet and so
to open a variable geography,
proliferate
possibility, here
is this dune fest
releasing
mind feeding out,
gathering clusters,
fields of order in disorder,
where choice
can make beginnings,
turns,
reversals,
where straight line
and air-hard thought
can meet
unarranged disorder,
dissolve
before the one event that
creates present time
in the multi-variable
scope:
a variable of wind
among the dunes,
making variables
of position and direction and sound
of every reed leaf
and bloom,
running streams of sand,
winding, rising, at a depression
falling out into deltas,
weathering shells with blast,
striking hiss into clumps of grass,
against bayberry leaves,
lifting
the spider from footing to footing
hard across the dry even crust
toward the surf:
wind, a variable, soft wind, hard
steady wind, wind
shaped and kept in the
bent of trees,
the prevailing dipping seaward
of reeds,
the kept and erased sandcrab trails:

wind, the variable to the gull's flight,
how and where he drops the clam
and the way he heads in, running to loft:
wind, from the sea, high surf
and cool weather;
from the land, a lessened breakage
and the land's heat:
wind alone as a variable,
as a factor in millions of events,
leaves no two moments
on the dunes the same:
 keep
free to these events,
bend to these
changing weathers:
multiple as sand, events of sense
alter old dunes
of mind,
release new channels of flow,
free materials
to new forms:
wind alone as a variable
takes this neck of dunes
out of calculation's reach:
come out of the hard
routes and ruts,
pour over the walls
of previous assessments: turn to
the open,
the unexpected, to new saliences of feature.

*

The reassurance is
that through change
continuities sinuously work,
cause and effect
 without alarm,
gradual shadings out or in,
motions that full
 with time
do not surprise, no
abrupt leap or burst: possibility,
with meaningful development
of circumstance:

when I went back to the dunes today,
 saliences,
congruent to memory,
spread firmly across my sight:

the narrow white path
rose and dropped over
grassy rises toward the sea:
sheets of reeds,
tasseling now near fall,
filled the hollows
with shapes of ponds or lakes:
bayberry, darker, made wandering
chains of clumps, sometimes pouring
into heads, like stopped water:
 much seemed
constant, to be looked
forward to, expected:
from the top of a dune rise,
look of ocean salience: in
 the hollow,
where a runlet
 makes in
at full tide and fills a bowl,
extravagance of pink periwinkle
along the grassy edge,
and a blue, bunchy weed, deep blue,
deep into the mind the dark blue
 constant:
minnows left high in the tide-deserted pocket,
 fiddler crabs
bringing up gray pellets of drying sand,
disappearing from air's faster events
at any close approach:
certain things and habits
 recognizable as
having lasted through the night:
though what change in
a day's doing!
desertions of swallows
 that yesterday
ravaged air, bush, reed, attention
in gatherings wide as this neck of dunes:
now, not a sound
or shadow, no trace of memory, no remnant
 explanation:
summations of permanence!
where not a single single thing endures,
the overall reassures,
deaths and flights,
shifts and sudden assaults claiming
limited orders,
the separate particles:
earth brings to grief

much in an hour that sang, leaped, swirled,
yet keeps a round
quiet turning,
beyond loss or gain,
beyond concern for the separate reach.

Expressions of Sea Level

Peripherally the ocean
marks itself
against the gauging land
it erodes and
builds:

it is hard to name
the changeless:
speech without words,
silence renders it:
and mid-ocean,

sky sealed unbroken to sea,
there is no way to know
the ocean's speech,
intervolved and markless,
breaking against

no boulder-held fingerland:
broken, surf things are expressions:
the sea speaks far from its core,
far from its center relinquishes the
long-held roar:

of any mid-sea
speech, the yielding resistances
of wind and water, spray,
swells, whitecaps, moans,
it is a dream the sea makes,

an inner problem, a self-deep
dark and private anguish
revealed in small,
by hints, to
keen watchers on the shore:
only with the staid land
is the level conversation really held:
only in the meeting of rock and
sea is
hard relevance shattered into light:

upbeach the clam shell
holds smooth dry sand,
remembrance of tide:
water can go at
least that high: in

the night, if you stay
to watch, or
if you come tomorrow at the right time,
you can see the shell caught
again in wash, the
sand turbulence changed,
new sand left smooth: if
the shell washes loose,
flops over,
buries its rim in flux,

it will not be silence for
a shell that spoke: the

half-buried back will
tell how the ocean dreamed
breakers against the land:

into the salt marshes the water comes fast with rising tide:
an inch of rise spreads by yards
through tidal creeks, round fingerways of land:
the marsh grasses stem-logged
combine wind and water motions,
slow from dry trembling
to heavier motions of wind translated through
cushioned stems; tide-held slant of grasses
bent into the wind:

is there a point of rest where
the tide turns: is there one
infinitely tiny higher touch
on the legs of egrets, the
skin of back, bay-eddy reeds:
is there an instant when fullness is,
without loss, complete: is there a
statement perfect in its speech:

how do you know the moon
is moving: see the dry
casting of the beach worm
dissolve at the
delicate rising touch:

that is the
expression of sea level.
the talk of giants,
of ocean, moon, sun, of everything,
spoken in a dampened grain of sand.

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